

Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 032989

R 131610Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1942

INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 09054

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO UK

SUBJECT: MBFR: UK VIEWS ON OPTION III

REF: (A) STATE 132089 (B) LONDON 8715 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. BRITISH GENERALLY CONCUR IN U.S. OPTION III PROPOSAL BUT THEY WISH THERE WAS MORE EMPHASIS IN U.S. PAPER ON THE COMMON CEILING AND ON CONTINUED FLEXIBILITY IN ARMAMENTS QUESTIONS AS THEY RELATE TO NON-U.S. NATO PARTICIPANTS. THEY WILL ACCEPT ALMOST ANY MECHANISM TO CONSIDER OPTION III IN NATO BUT WILL INSIST ON THOROUGH STUDY OF TECHNICAL/MILITARY IMPLICATIONS BEFORE AGREEING TO DEPLOYMENT. END SUMMARY.

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1. ON JUNE 11, WE FOLLOWED UP REF (B) IN A CONVERSATION WITH TERENCE WOOD OF FCO TO SOLICIT UK REACTIONS TO THE U.S. OPTION III PROPOSAL. WOOD HAD STUDIED U.S. PAPER CAREFULLY. HIS FIRST COMMENT WAS THAT U.S. HAD MADE A STRONG EFFORT TO ACCOMMODATE UK VIEWS, PARTICULARLY ON THE PROBLEM OF POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS ON NON-U.S. WEAPONS SYSTEMS. BUT HE FELT THAT THERE STILL ARE DIFFERENCES IN EMPHASIS WHICH WILL REQUIRE SERIOUS CONSULTATION IN NATO.

2. THE UK HAS TWO SPECIAL AREAS OF CONCERN:

(A) UK OFFICIALS ARE TROUBLED THAT OPTION III AS SET OUT IN THE U.S. PAPER IS A STRAIGHT TRADE OF U.S. NUCLEAR CAPABILITY FOR SOVIET TANKS. THE BRITISH WANT TO HAVE ACCEPTANCE OF THE COMMON CEILING INCLUDED AS PART OF THE PRICE THE RUSSIANS MUST PAY FOR OPTION III. THE BRITISH CONCEDE THAT SOVIET TANK STRENGTH IS ONE OF THE CHIEF AREAS OF ASYMMETRY IN THE NGA BUT THEY BELIEVE THAT OPTION III SHOULD HAVE A HIGHER VALUE THAN JUST A MAKEWEIGHT FOR THE TANKS. THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCESSION IN OPTION III IN THE BRITISH MIND IS NOT THE HARDWARE ITSELF BUT THE FACT THAT ITS DEPLOYMENT WILL INDICATE DEFACTO ALLIED ACCEPTANCE OF THE WP IDEA THAT WESTERN EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN MBFR.

(B) THE BRITISH ARE ALSO CONCERNED THAT THE U.S. FORMULATION ON NON-U.S. AND NSWP ARMAMENTS (PARA 44 OF PAPER) IMPLIES THAT WHILE DISCUSSION OF THESE ITEMS IS "INAPPROPRIATE FOR DISCUSSION IN PHASE I", IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE FOR PHASE II. UK DOES NOT WANT TO MAKE ANY COMMITMENT, EVEN IMPLIED, TO DISCUSS NON-U.S. ARMAMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH OPTION III.

3. ON MACHINERY FOR NATO CONSULTATION, WOOD SAID BASIC

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 09054

EXDIS

PROBLEM APPEARS TO BE DIFFERENCE IN APPROACH BY U.S. AND UK. U.S. SEEMS TO WANT EXPEDITIOUS CONSIDERATION IN ORDER TO AVOID PROBLEMS -- LIKE THE PARTICIPATION OF PORTUGAL. THIS APPROACH HAS MERIT BUT LOGIC LEADS TO CONCLUSION THAT RESULTING STUDY WOULD BE SUPERFICIAL. BRITISH BELIEVE THAT IMPLICATIONS OF OPTION III WILL BE FAR-REACHING FOR FUTURE OF NATO. IT MAY AFFECT FORCE STRUCTURE, TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS DOCTRINE, ETC. THUS IT IS MANDATORY THAT MILITARY/TECHNICAL IMPLICATIONS BE STUDIED CAREFULLY AND THOROUGHLY IN ADDITION TO CONSIDERATION OF GENERAL POLITICAL QUESTIONS RAISED BECAUSE OF THIS ISSUE. UK DOES NOT HAVE STRONG FEELINGS ON MECHANISM FOR THIS WORK BUT DOES FEEL THAT THE REQUIREMENT MUST BE MET.

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4. COMMENT. IT APPEARS TO US THAT UK POSITION ON MBFR IS ANCHORED ON TWO MAIN PILLARS: (1) THE COMMON CEILING CONCEPT IS SACROSANCT AND (2) THE RESTRICTIONS ON FLEXIBILITY AND ARMAMENTS OF NON-U.S. NATO PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE KEPT TO AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. THIS POLICY IS HELD STRONGLY AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS IN THE DEFENSE/ FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMUNITY IN THE UK. IT WAS MOST RECENTLY RATIFIED IN SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MASON'S PERSONAL APPROVAL OF THE UK COMMENTS ON THE U.S. OPTION III PAPER. AS WOOD POINTED OUT TO US, THIS IS ONE AREA

WHERE THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS NOT WAVERED SINCE ITS
ACCESSION TO POWER IN EARLY 1974. EVEN THOUGH THE
BRITISH WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO CUT THEIR GROUND
FORCES IN GERMANY IN THE CONTEXT OF MBFR BECAUSE OF
BUDGETARY PRESSURES, THEY ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE
ACTUAL SECURITY SITUATION IN THE NGA AND WILL OPPOSE
ALLIED INITIATIVES WHICH APPEAR TO BE ONE-SIDED CONCESS-
IONS MADE ONLY TO ACHIEVE AN AGREEMENT. BUT THEY ARE
COMMITTED TO WORK TOWARD A MBFR AGREEMENT AND WILL
APPROACH THIS NATO CONSULTATION WITH THE INTENTION OF
CONTRIBUTING TO AN AGREED ALLIED POSITION RATHER THAN
SEEKING TO DELAY OR OPPOSE OPTION III BECAUSE OF A BAS-
IC DISLIKE OF MBFR. WE BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL CONCUR IN
OPTION III AS PROPOSED BY THE U.S., IF WE CAN AGREE ON
SOME STRENGTHENING OF THE EMPHASIS ON THE COMMON CEILING
AND SOME MOVEMENT IN THE DIRECTION OF MAXIMUM NON-U.S.
NATO FLEXIBILITY ON ARMAMENTS. END COMMENT. RICHARDSON

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